

FORM PTO-1390 OFFICE (REV. 11-2000)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK	ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 32860-000301/US
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371			U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 CFR 1.5) 10/089304
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/DE00/03261	INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE September 15, 2000	PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED September 30, 1999	
TITLE OF INVENTION DEVICE FOR ARRANGING THE ACTUATING SHAFT OF A LOW-VOLTAGE CIRCUIT BREAKER AND MULTIPOLE LOW-VOLTAGE CIRCUIT BREAKER WITH A DEVICE FOR ARRANGING THE ACTUATING SHAFT			
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US Michael BACH; Detlev SCHMIDT; Michael SEBEKOW; Guenter SEIDLER-STAHLE; Ingo THIEDE and Sezai TUERKMEN			
Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371. 2. <input type="checkbox"/> This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371. 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39 (1). 4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The US has been elected by the expiration of 19 months from the priority date (Article 31). 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau). WO 01/24208 A1 b. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> has been transmitted by the International Bureau. c. <input type="checkbox"/> is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US). 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is transmitted herewith. b. <input type="checkbox"/> has been previously submitted under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4) 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input type="checkbox"/> are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau). b. <input type="checkbox"/> have been transmitted by the International Bureau. c. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired. d. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> have not been made and will not be made. 8. <input type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)). 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)). 10. <input type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the annexes of the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)). 			
Items 11. to 20. below concern document(s) or information included:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98-1449 and International Search Report (PCT/ISA/210) in German with Three (3) references and a German Translation Aid. 12. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included. 13. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A FIRST preliminary amendment. 14. <input type="checkbox"/> A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment. 15. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A substitute specification. 16. <input type="checkbox"/> A change of power of attorney and/or address letter. 17. <input type="checkbox"/> A computer-readable form of the sequence listing in accordance with PCT Rule 13ter.2 and 35 U.S.C. 1.821-1.825. 18. <input type="checkbox"/> A second copy of the published international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4). 19. <input type="checkbox"/> A second copy of the English language translation of the international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4). 20. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other items or information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Two (2) sheets of Formal Drawings 			

JC15 Rec'd PCT/PTO 29 MAR 2002

APPLICATION NO (if known, see 37 CFR 1.5) 10/089304		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO PCT/DE00/03261		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 32860-000301/US	
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<p>21. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted.</p> <p>BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5): Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO. \$1,040.00</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO \$890.00</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO. \$710.00</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$690.00</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4). \$100.00</p> <p>ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =</p> <p>Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).</p> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width:15%;">CLAIMS</th> <th style="width:20%;">NUMBER FILED</th> <th style="width:20%;">NUMBER EXTRA</th> <th style="width:20%;">RATE</th> <th style="width:25%;"></th> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Claims</td> <td>10 - 20 =</td> <td>0</td> <td>X \$18.00</td> <td>\$ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Independent Claims</td> <td>2 - 3 =</td> <td>0</td> <td>X \$84.00</td> <td>\$ 0</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable)</td> <td>None</td> <td>+ \$280.00</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: right;">TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS = \$ 890.00</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27. The fees indicated above are reduced by 1/2.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">SUBTOTAL = \$ 890.00</p> <p>Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">TOTAL NATIONAL FEE = \$ 890.00</p> <p>Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 per property +</p> <p style="text-align: right;">TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED = \$ 930.00</p> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width:60%;"></td> <td style="width:20%;">Amount to be: refunded</td> <td style="width:20%;">\$</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>charged</td> <td>\$</td> </tr> </table>	CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE		Total Claims	10 - 20 =	0	X \$18.00	\$ 0	Independent Claims	2 - 3 =	0	X \$84.00	\$ 0	MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable)			None	+ \$280.00		Amount to be: refunded	\$		charged	\$	<p>CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY</p>
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☒ A check in the amount of \$ 930.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.

☐ Please charge my Deposit Account. No. 08-0750 in the amount of \$ to cover the above fees.
 A triplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

☐ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any
 overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750.

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR
 1.497(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

all correspondence to:
 Messrs. Dickey & Pierce, P.L.C. - Customer No. 30596
 c/o Office Box 8910
 Alexandria, Virginia 22304

By: March 29, 2002

By Donald J. Daley, #34,313

IN THE U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants: Michael BACH; Detlev SCHMIDT; Michael SEBEKOW; Guenter SEIDLER-STAHLE; Ingo THIEDE; Sezai TUEKMEK.

Int'l App. No.: PCT/DE00/03261

Application No.: NEW

Filed: March 29, 2002

For: DEVICE FOR ARRANGING THE ACTUATING SHAFT OF A LOW-VOLTAGE CIRCUIT BREAKER AND MULTIPOLAR LOW-VOLTAGE CIRCUIT BREAKER WITH A DEVICE FOR ARRANGING THE ACTUATING SHAFT

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

March 29, 2002

Sir:

The following preliminary amendments and remarks are respectfully submitted in connection with the above-identified application.

IN THE ABSTRACT

Please replace the Abstract with the attached revised Abstract.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A bearing arrangement for a switching shaft of a low-voltage circuit breaker, in which two coupling levers are arranged at a distance from one another on an integral switching shaft, for mechanical connection of a movable switching contact associated with one switch pole, comprising:

a bearing assembly, connected to a housing front wall of the switch pole and including a bearing body mounted on the housing front wall of the switch pole, surrounding the switching shaft in the form of a half shell, and wherein a first subregion of the bearing body is arranged between the coupling levers and forms side guide surfaces for the coupling levers, which are connected to the switching shaft.

2. (Amended) The arrangement as claimed in claim 1,

wherein the bearing body includes a second subregion, which projects axially beyond the coupling levers and forms stop surfaces for the coupling levers.

3. (Amended) The arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the bearing assembly includes a catch hook, whose mating piece forms a bolt which passes through the coupling levers, with the catch hook being mounted in a recess in the bearing body so as to be pivotable.

4. (Amended) A multipole low-voltage circuit breaker including a bearing arrangement as claimed in claim 1.

Please add the following new claims:

- 5. The arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the bearing assembly includes a catch hook, whose mating piece forms a bolt which passes through the coupling levers, with the catch hook being mounted in a recess in the bearing body so as to be pivotable.

6. A multipole low-voltage circuit breaker including a bearing arrangement as claimed in claim 2.

7. A multipole low-voltage circuit breaker including a bearing arrangement as claimed in claim 3.

8. A multipole low-voltage circuit breaker comprising:

a plurality of switching contacts;

a switching shaft, in which two coupling levers are arranged on the switching shaft for mechanical connection of each movable switching contact, associated with a switch pole; and

a bearing assembly connected to a housing front wall of the switch pole and including a bearing body mounted on the housing front wall of the switch pole, surrounding the switching shaft in the form of a half shell, wherein a first subregion of the bearing body is arranged between the coupling levers and forms side guide surfaces for the coupling levers, which are connected to the switching shaft.

9. The multipole low-voltage circuit breaker of claim 8, wherein the bearing body includes a second subregion, which projects axially beyond the coupling levers and forms stop surfaces for the coupling levers.

10. The multipole low-voltage circuit breaker of claim 8, wherein the bearing assembly includes a catch hook, whose mating piece forms a bolt which passes through the coupling levers, with the catch hook being mounted in a recess in the bearing body so as to be pivotable. --

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are now present in this application, with new claims 5-10 being added by the present Preliminary Amendment. It should be noted that the amendments to original claims 1-4 of the present application are non-narrowing amendments, made solely to place the claims in proper form for U.S. practice and not to overcome any prior art or for any other statutory considerations. For example, amendments have been made to broaden the claims;

remove reference numerals in the claims; remove the European phrase "characterized in that"; remove multiple dependencies in the claims; and to place claims in a more recognizable U.S. form, including the use of the transitional phrase "comprising" as well as the phrase "wherein". Other such non-narrowing amendments include placing apparatus-type claims (setting elements forth in separate paragraphs) in a more recognizable U.S. form. Again, all amendments are non-narrowing and have been made solely to place the claims in proper form for U.S. practice and not to overcome any prior art or for any other statutory considerations.

SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.125, a substitute specification has been included in lieu of substitute paragraphs in connection with the present Preliminary Amendment. The substitute specification is submitted in clean form, attached hereto, and is accompanied by a marked-up version showing the changes made to the original specification. The changes have been made in an effort to place the specification in better form for U.S. practice. No new matter has been added by these changes to the specification. Further, the substitute specification includes paragraph numbers to facilitate amendment practice as requested by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, an early indication of the allowability of each of claims 1-10 in connection with the present application is earnestly solicited.

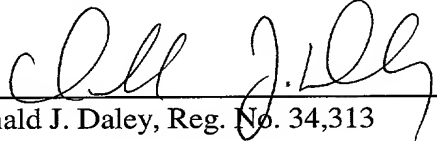
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Donald J. Daley at the

telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

HARNESS, DICKY & PIERCE, P.L.C

By: 
Donald J. Daley, Reg. No. 34,313

P.O. Box 8910
Reston, Virginia 20195
(703) 390-3030

DJD:kna

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In order to provide a bearing for an already prepositioned switching shaft, fitted with coupling levers, of a low-voltage circuit breaker in the region where the switching forces act, a bearing assembly is provided. The bearing assembly includes a bearing body which is mounted on the housing front wall of the switch pole, surrounding the switching shaft in the form of a half shell. The bearing body includes a subregion which projects between two coupling levers, which are at a distance from one another and are connected to a movable switching contact. It thus forms side guide surfaces for the coupling levers. Such a bearing assembly can be arranged in both the end regions of the switching shaft in multipole circuit breakers.

SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION

DEVICE FOR ARRANGING THE ACTUATING SHAFT OF A LOW -VOLTAGE CIRCUIT BREAKER AND MULTIPOLE LOW-VOLTAGE CIRCUIT BREAKER WITH A DEVICE FOR ARRANGING THE ACTUATING SHAFT

[0001] This application is the national phase under 35 U.S.C. § 371 of PCT International Application No. PCT/DE00/03261 which has an International filing date of September 15, 2000, which designated the United States of America, the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

Field of the Invention

[0002] The invention generally relates to the field of the design configuration of a circuit breaker which is used in low-voltage networks. It may be related to one which is applicable to the configuration of the bearing for the integral switching shaft of such a switch.

Background of the Invention

[0003] Low-voltage circuit breakers have one or more switch poles. The switching contact systems, which include fixed and movable switching contacts, of these switch poles are normally mechanically connected to coupling levers, which are arranged on a switching shaft which is common to all the switch poles.

[0004] For such a circuit breaker to operate correctly, it is essential for the switching shaft to have radially precise bearings, with little axial play. A known bearing arrangement which is suitable for this purpose has, in the region of the coupling levers, a bearing assembly which is connected to a housing front wall of the switch pole and contains a bearing body with a cylindrical bearing surface. The production of the switching shaft and its installation are simplified by subdivision into two symmetrical subelements. Each subelement is provided with a radial bearing and an axial bearing at one end by means of the main bearing body. Two further auxiliary bearing bodies are required for the complete axial bearing.

[0005] In the case of an integral switching shaft, such a shaft would be permanently connected to the main bearing body by the coupling levers, which are arranged in fixed positions on both sides of the main bearing body. If the main bearing body is faulty, the entire switching shaft must be replaced together with it (DE 197 39 702 C1).

[0006] In another known bearing arrangement, the integral switching shaft, which is fitted with all the coupling levers, can be prepositioned in its installed position, independently of the bearing assembly. In this case, the switching shaft is positioned in recesses, which are open at the edges, in walls which are arranged at right angles to the longitudinal axis of the switching shaft. One shaft bearing, which includes two half shells, is then inserted in the axial direction into each of the recesses. Such a shaft bearing provides a radial bearing for the

switching shaft away from the points at which the switching forces act. The location of the axial bearing is not mentioned (DE 44 16 090 C1).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] An embodiment of the invention includes an object of designing the bearing assembly such that the switching shaft, which is already prepositioned in its installed position and is provided with the coupling levers, is mounted at the point where the switching forces act. This can be done in a manner such that it is insensitive to tolerances and is convenient for assembly.

[0008] According to an embodiment of the invention, an object can be achieved by the bearing body being mounted on the housing front wall of the switch pole, surrounding the switching shaft in the form of a half shell, and by a first subregion of the bearing body being arranged between the coupling levers and forming side guide surfaces for the coupling levers which are connected to the switching shaft.

[0009] This configuration allows the bearing assembly and the switching shaft to be replaced independently of one another at any time.

[0010] In this case, the bearing assembly has a simple construction and can thus be produced cost-effectively. In addition, it is compact and can thus be installed easily and in a space-saving manner. In addition, the switching shaft bearing can be very largely independent of tolerances, since the switching shaft uses the same bearing body for both radial and axial bearing.

[0011] Stops for the on and off positions of the switching contacts can be provided easily, according to one development of the invention, in that a second subregion of the bearing body projects axially beyond the coupling levers and forms stop surfaces for the coupling levers.

[0012] If the catch hook, which is normally used in an arrangement such as this, is mounted in a window-like recess in the bearing body such that it can pivot, and the mating piece is in the form of a bolt which passes through the coupling levers, this additional element is integrated in a space-saving manner in the bearing assembly.

[0013] One arrangement designed according to the invention for the switching shaft bearing is expediently used in multipole low-voltage circuit breakers in such a way that a bearing assembly at each of the two ends of the switching shaft is associated with the axially outer movable switching contacts. The switching shaft bearing is thus defined statically.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] An exemplary embodiment of the invention is illustrated in Figures 1-4 of the drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 shows a bearing assembly with a bearing body designed according to an embodiment of the invention,
Figure 2 shows an integral switching shaft with two bearing assemblies (as shown in Figure 1) arranged at its ends, viewed in perspective, and
Figures 3 and 4 show section illustrations of a bearing assembly arranged as shown in Figure 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0015] Figure 1 shows a bearing assembly 1 with a bearing body 2 and a catch device 3. The bearing body 2 is subdivided into a number of subregions 4, 5, 6, 7, 71 and 72, which are used to provide the bearing for a switching shaft 8, which is illustrated in Figure 2, the stop for coupling levers 9 and 10 during the switching-on and switching-off processes, the holder for the catch device 3 and the mounting for the bearing assembly 1 on one housing front wall 25 of the switch poles.

[0016] As is shown in Figure 2, the switching shaft 8 is mounted close to its ends by two bearing assemblies 1 as shown in Figure 1. Two coupling levers 9 and 10 are arranged in each end region of the switching shaft 8 and are used to provide the mechanical connection for a movable switching contact 11 which is associated with an outer switch pole. For this purpose, they are arranged in a fixed position on the switching shaft 8, and are at the same time used to provide the axial bearing for the switching shaft 8. Each bearing assembly 1 has in each case one first subregion 4, whose axial width is matched to the distance between the coupling levers 9 and 10. This first subregion 4 of the bearing body 2 accordingly projects with a small amount of axial play between the coupling levers 9 and 10 and surrounds the switching shaft 8 in the form of a half shell in one direction, which is the opposite direction to that in which the forces occur during the connection process. This first subregion 4 of the bearing body 2 thus forms side guide surfaces 13 (see Figure 1) for the coupling levers 9 and 10, which are connected in a fixed manner to the switching shaft 8.

[0017] A second subregion 5 projects beyond the coupling levers 9 and 10 axially and forms stop surfaces 14 (see Figure 1) and 15 for the coupling levers 9 and 10, in order to limit the movement of the switching shaft 8. The catch device 3 of each bearing assembly 1 has a catch hook 16 which, during the switching-off process, engages behind a bolt 17 (see also Figure 4), which passes through both coupling levers 9 and 10. The catch hook 16 is arranged on a bearing bolt 19 in a window-like recess 18 in a third subregion 6 of the bearing body 2, and is mounted such that it can pivot against the force of a wire torsion spring 20. The catch hook 16 and the wire torsion spring 20 can thus be integrated in the bearing assembly easily and in a space-saving manner even before the installation of the bearing assembly 1.

[0018] Figure 3 shows a section through the first and third subregions 4 and 6 of the bearing body 2. The window-like recess 18 for the catch hook 16 has a narrow upper region 21 (see

Figure 1) and a broader lower region 22 (see Figure 1). The narrow upper region 21 is matched to the width of the catch hook 16 and fixes it axially, except for a small amount of play. The broader lower region 22 is used to provide additional retention for the wire torsion spring 20. The coupling levers 9 and 10 are in the on position here.

[0019] The two bearing assemblies 1 have holes 23 in further subregions 7, 71 and 72 (see also Figure 1) and are connected in a force-fitting and interlocking manner by means of screw connections 24 to the housing front wall 25 of the switch poles. This housing front wall 25 may have a depression 26 in the form of a half shell, as illustrated in Figure 2, in order to predetermine the installation position of the switching shaft 8, and hence to simplify installation of the switching shaft.

[0020] Depending on the length of the switching shaft, auxiliary bearing bodies can be arranged in a known manner to provide an additional bearing for the switching shaft. However, all the switch poles of a multipole low-voltage circuit breaker may also have an associated bearing assembly as shown in Figure 1.

[0021] Figure 4 shows a section through the second subregion 5 of the bearing body 2, which extends axially outside the coupling levers 9 and 10. Here, however, the coupling levers 9 and 10 are in the off position. At least one of the two coupling levers 9 and 10 is designed such that, during a switching-off process, a section 27 of the circumferential edge of this coupling lever abuts against a first surface 14, which is used as an off stop, of the bearing body 2.

[0022] At least one of the two coupling levers 9 and 10 may have a cantilever arm 28 like a hooked nose which, during a switching-on process, abuts against a second surface 15, which is used as an on stop, of the bearing body. An on stop such as this is required, for example, in current-limiting low-voltage circuit breakers.

[0023] The invention being thus described, it will be obvious that the same may be varied in many ways. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit and scope of the invention, and all such modifications as would be obvious to one skilled in the art are intended to be included within the scope of the following claims.

Description

DEVICE FOR ARRANGING THE ACTUATING SHAFT OF A LOW -VOLTAGE
CIRCUIT BREAKER AND MULTIPOLE LOW-VOLTAGE CIRCUIT BREAKER WITH
A DEVICE FOR ARRANGING THE ACTUATING SHAFT ~~Bearing arrangement~~
~~for the switching shaft of a low voltage circuit breaker, and~~
~~a multipole low voltage circuit breaker having a bearing~~
~~arrangement for the switching shaft~~

This application is the national phase under 35 U.S.C. § 371 of PCT International Application
No. PCT/_____ which has an International filing date of _____, which
designated the United States of America, the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated
by reference.

Field of the Invention

The invention generally relates to the field of the design
configuration of a circuit breaker which is used in low-
voltage networks. It may be related to one which ~~and~~ is
applicable to the configuration of the bearing for the
integral switching shaft of such a switch.

Background of the Invention

Low-voltage circuit breakers have one or more switch poles.
The switching contact systems, which ~~include~~ ~~comprise~~ fixed and
movable switching contacts, of these switch poles are normally
mechanically connected to coupling levers, which are arranged
on a switching shaft which is common to all the switch poles.

For such a circuit breaker to operate correctly, it is
essential for the switching shaft to have radially precise
bearings, with little axial play. A known bearing arrangement
which is suitable for this purpose has, in the region of the
coupling levers, a bearing assembly which is connected to a
housing front wall of the switch pole and contains a bearing
body with a cylindrical bearing surface. The production of the
switching shaft and its installation are simplified by

subdivision into two symmetrical subelements. Each subelement is provided with a radial bearing and an axial bearing at one end by means of the main bearing body. Two further auxiliary bearing bodies are required for the complete axial bearing.

In the case of an integral switching shaft, such a shaft would be permanently connected to the main bearing body by the coupling levers, which are arranged in fixed positions on both sides of the main bearing body. If the main bearing body is faulty, the entire switching shaft must be replaced together with it (DE 197 39 702 C1).

In another known bearing arrangement, the integral switching shaft, which is fitted with all the coupling levers, can be prepositioned in its installed position, independently of the bearing assembly. In this case, the switching shaft is positioned in recesses, which are open at the edges, in walls which are arranged at right angles to the longitudinal axis of the switching shaft. One shaft bearing, which ~~includes~~ comprises two half shells, is then inserted in the axial direction into each of the recesses. Such a shaft bearing provides a radial bearing for the switching shaft away from the points at which the switching forces act. The location of the axial bearing is not mentioned (DE 44 16 090 C1).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An embodiment of ~~Against the background of an arrangement having the features of the precharacterizing clause of claim 1 (DE 197 39 702 C1),~~ the invention includes and based on the object of designing the bearing assembly such that the switching shaft, which is already prepositioned in its installed position and is provided with the coupling levers, is mounted at the point where the switching forces act. This can be done, in a manner such that it is insensitive to tolerances and is convenient for assembly.

According to an embodiment of the invention, anthis object can be achieved by in-that the bearing body beingis mounted on the housing front wall of the switch pole, surrounding the switching shaft in the form of a half shell, and byin-that a first subregion of the bearing body beingis arranged between the coupling levers and formings side guide surfaces for the coupling levers which are connected to the switching shaft. This configuration allows the bearing assembly and the switching shaft to be replaced independently of one another at any time.

In this case, the bearing assembly has a simple construction and can thus be produced cost-effectively. In addition, it is compact and can thus be installed easily and in a space-saving manner. In addition, the switching shaft bearing can beis very largely independent of tolerances, since the switching shaft uses the same bearing body for both radial and axial bearing.

Stops for the on and off positions of the switching contacts can be provided easily, according to one development of the invention, in that a second subregion of the bearing body projects axially beyond the coupling levers and forms stop surfaces for the coupling levers.

If the catch hook, which is normally used in an arrangement such as this, is mounted in a window-like recess in the bearing body such that it can pivot, and the mating piece is in the form of a bolt which passes through the coupling levers, this additional element is integrated in a space-saving manner in the bearing assembly.

One arrangement designed according to the invention for the switching shaft bearing is expediently used in multipole low-voltage circuit breakers in such a way that a bearing assembly at each of the two ends of the switching shaft is associated with the axially outer movable switching contacts. The switching shaft bearing is thus defined statically.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

An exemplary embodiment of the invention is illustrated in Figures 1-4 of the drawings, wherein:-

~~In this case:-~~

Figure 1 shows a bearing assembly with a bearing body designed according to an embodiment of the invention,

Figure 2 shows an integral switching shaft with two bearing assemblies (as shown in Figure 1) arranged at its ends, viewed in perspective, and

Figures 3 and 4 show section illustrations of a bearing assembly arranged as shown in Figure 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Figure 1 shows a bearing assembly 1 with a bearing body 2 and a catch device 3. The bearing body 2 is subdivided into a number of subregions 4, 5, 6, 7, 71 and 72, which are used to provide the bearing for a switching shaft 8, which is illustrated in Figure 2, the stop for coupling levers 9 and 10 during the switching-on and switching-off processes, the holder for the catch device 3 and the mounting for the bearing assembly 1 on one housing front wall 25 of the switch poles.

As is shown in Figure 2, the switching shaft 8 is mounted close to its ends by two bearing assemblies 1 as shown in Figure 1. Two coupling levers 9 and 10 are arranged in each end region of the switching shaft 8 and are used to provide the mechanical connection for a movable switching contact 11 which is associated with an outer switch pole, ~~and~~ for this purpose, they are arranged in a fixed position on the switching shaft 8, and are at the same time used to provide the axial bearing for the switching shaft 8. Each bearing assembly 1 has in each case one first subregion 4, whose axial

width is matched to the distance between the coupling levers 9 and 10. This first subregion 4 of the bearing body 2 accordingly projects with a small amount of axial play between the coupling levers 9 and 10 and surrounds the switching shaft 8 in the form of a half shell in one direction, which is the opposite direction to that in which the forces occur during the connection process. This first subregion 4 of the bearing body 2 thus forms side guide surfaces 13 (see Figure 1) for the coupling levers 9 and 10, which are connected in a fixed manner to the switching shaft 8.

A second subregion 5 projects beyond the coupling levers 9 and 10 axially and forms stop surfaces 14 (see Figure 1) and 15 for the coupling levers 9 and 10, in order to limit the movement of the switching shaft 8. The catch device 3 of each bearing assembly 1 has a catch hook 16 which, during the switching-off process, engages behind a bolt 17 (see also Figure 4), which passes through both coupling levers 9 and 10. The catch hook 16 is arranged on a bearing bolt 19 in a window-like recess 18 in a third subregion 6 of the bearing body 2, and is mounted such that it can pivot against the force of a wire torsion spring 20. The catch hook 16 and the wire torsion spring 20 can thus be integrated in the bearing assembly easily and in a space-saving manner even before the installation of the bearing assembly 1.

Figure 3 shows a section through the first and third subregions 4 and 6 of the bearing body 2. The window-like recess 18 for the catch hook 16 has a narrow upper region 21 (see Figure 1) and a broader lower region 22 (see Figure 1). The narrow upper region 21 is matched to the width of the catch hook 16 and fixes it axially, except for a small amount of play. The broader lower region 22 is used to provide additional retention for the wire torsion spring 20. The coupling levers 9 and 10 are in the on position here.

The two bearing assemblies 1 have holes 23 in further subregions 7, 71 and 72 (see also Figure 1) and are connected in a force-fitting and interlocking manner by means of screw connections 24 to the housing front wall 25 of the switch poles. This housing front wall 25 may have a depression 26 in the form of a half shell, as illustrated in Figure 2, in order to predetermine the installation position of the switching shaft 8, and hence to simplify installation of the switching shaft.

Depending on the length of the switching shaft, auxiliary bearing bodies can be arranged in a known manner to provide an additional bearing for the switching shaft. However, all the switch poles of a multipole low-voltage circuit breaker may also have an associated bearing assembly as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 4 shows a section through the second subregion 5 of the bearing body 2, which extends axially outside the coupling levers 9 and 10. Here, however, the coupling levers 9 and 10 are in the off position. At least one of the two coupling levers 9 and 10 is designed such that, during a switching-off process, a section 27 of the circumferential edge of this coupling lever abuts against a first surface 14, which is used as an off stop, of the bearing body 2.

At least one of the two coupling levers 9 and 10 may have a cantilever arm 28 like a hooked nose which, during a switching-on process, abuts against a second surface 15, which is used as an on stop, of the bearing body. An on stop such as this is required, for example, in current-limiting low-voltage circuit breakers.

The invention being thus described, it will be obvious that the same may be varied in many ways. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit and scope of the invention, and all such modifications as would be obvious to one skilled in the art are intended to be included within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is: ~~Patent Claims~~

1. (Amended) A bearing arrangement for ~~a~~the switching shaft ~~(8)~~ of a low-voltage circuit breaker, in which two coupling levers ~~(9, 10)~~ are arranged at a distance from one another on ~~an~~the integral switching shaft ~~(8)~~, for mechanical connection of a movable switching contact ~~(11)~~ ~~which is~~ associated with one switch pole, comprising:

~~and in which a bearing assembly, (1) which is~~ connected to a housing front wall ~~(25)~~ of the switch pole and including ~~has~~ a bearing body ~~(2)~~ ~~is arranged in the region of the coupling levers (9, 10),~~

~~characterized in that~~

~~the bearing body (2) is mounted on the housing front wall (25) of the switch pole, surrounding the switching shaft (8) in the form of a half shell, and wherein~~

~~a first subregion (4) of the bearing body (2) is arranged between the coupling levers (9, 10) and forms side guide surfaces (13) for the coupling levers, (9, 10) which are connected to the switching shaft (8).~~

2. (Amended) The arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the bearing body includes ~~characterized in that~~
~~a second subregion, which (5) of the bearing body (2) projects axially beyond the coupling levers (9, 10) and forms stop surfaces (14, 15) for the coupling levers (9, 10).~~

3. (Amended) The arrangement as claimed in claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein

~~characterized in that~~

~~the bearing assembly includes (1) has~~ a catch hook ~~(16)~~, whose mating piece forms a bolt ~~(17)~~ which passes through the coupling levers ~~(9, 10)~~, with the catch hook ~~(16)~~ being mounted in a ~~window-like~~ recess ~~(18)~~ ~~in the bearing body (2) so as to be pivotable~~ ~~such that it~~

can pivot.

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4. (Amended) A multipole low-voltage circuit breaker including a bearing arrangement as claimed in claim 1.

~~A multipole low voltage circuit breaker having a bearing arrangement for the switching shaft (8), in which two coupling levers (9, 10) are in each case arranged on the switching shaft (8) for mechanical connection of each movable switching contact (11) which is associated with a switch pole, and one bearing assembly (1), having a bearing body (2) designed as claimed in one of claims 1 to 3, is associated with each of the two coupling levers (9, 10) of the two axially outer movable switching contacts (11).~~NEW

5. The arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein the bearing assembly includes a catch hook, whose mating piece forms a bolt which passes through the coupling levers, with the catch hook being mounted in a recess in the bearing body so as to be pivotable.

6. A multipole low-voltage circuit breaker including a bearing arrangement as claimed in claim 2.

7. A multipole low-voltage circuit breaker including a bearing arrangement as claimed in claim 3.

8. A multipole low-voltage circuit breaker comprising:
a plurality of switching contacts;
a switching shaft, in which two coupling levers are arranged on the switching shaft for mechanical connection of each movable switching contact, associated with a switch pole; and
a bearing assembly connected to a housing front wall of the switch pole and including a bearing body mounted on the housing front wall of the switch pole, surrounding the switching shaft in the form of a half shell, wherein a first subregion of the bearing body is arranged between the coupling levers and forms side guide surfaces for the

9. The multipole low-voltage circuit breaker of claim 8, wherein the bearing body includes a second subregion, which projects axially beyond the coupling levers and forms stop surfaces for the coupling levers.

10

32860-000301-0229002

Abstract

~~Bearing arrangement for the switching shaft of a low voltage circuit breaker, and a multipole low voltage circuit breaker having a bearing arrangement for the switching shaft~~ABSTRACT

In order to provide a bearing for ~~an~~the already prepositioned switching shaft ~~8~~, which ~~is~~ fitted with coupling levers ~~9~~ and ~~10~~, of a low-voltage circuit breaker in the region where the switching forces act, ~~at~~the bearing assembly ~~1~~ which ~~is~~ is provided. The bearing assembly includes ~~for this purpose has~~ a bearing body 2 which is mounted on the housing front wall ~~25~~ of the switch pole, surrounding the switching shaft ~~8~~ in the form of a half shell ~~7~~. The bearing body includes ~~has~~ a subregion 4 which projects between two coupling levers ~~9~~ and ~~10~~, which are at a distance from one another and are connected to a movable switching contact ~~11~~, and. It ~~thus~~ forms side guide surfaces ~~13~~ for the coupling levers ~~9~~ and ~~10~~. Such ~~Aa~~ bearing assembly ~~1~~ ~~such as this~~ can be arranged in both the end regions of the switching shaft ~~8~~ in multipole circuit breakers.

Figure 2

Description

Bearing arrangement for the switching shaft of a low-voltage circuit breaker, and a multipole low-voltage circuit breaker having a bearing arrangement for the switching shaft

The invention relates to the field of the design configuration of a circuit breaker which is used in low-voltage networks, and is applicable to the configuration of the bearing for the integral switching shaft of such a switch.

Low-voltage circuit breakers have one or more switch poles. The switching contact systems, which comprise fixed and movable switching contacts, of these switch poles are normally mechanically connected to coupling levers, which are arranged on a switching shaft which is common to all the switch poles.

For such a circuit breaker to operate correctly, it is essential for the switching shaft to have radially precise bearings, with little axial play. A known bearing arrangement which is suitable for this purpose has, in the region of the coupling levers, a bearing assembly which is connected to a housing front wall of the switch pole and contains a bearing body with a cylindrical bearing surface. The production of the switching shaft and its installation are simplified by subdivision into two symmetrical subelements. Each subelement is provided with a radial bearing and an axial bearing at one end by means of the main bearing body. Two further auxiliary bearing bodies are required for the complete axial bearing.

In the case of an integral switching shaft, such a shaft would be permanently connected to the main bearing body by the coupling levers, which are arranged in fixed positions on both sides of the main bearing body. If the main bearing body is faulty, the entire switching shaft must be replaced together with it (DE 197 39 702 C1).

In another known bearing arrangement, the integral switching shaft, which is fitted with all the coupling levers, can be prepositioned in its installed position, independently of the bearing assembly. In this case, the switching shaft is positioned in recesses, which are open at the edges, in walls which are arranged at right angles to the longitudinal axis of the switching shaft. One shaft bearing, which comprises two half shells, is then inserted in the axial direction into each of the recesses. Such a shaft bearing provides a radial bearing for the switching shaft away from the points at which the switching forces act. The location of the axial bearing is not mentioned (DE 44 16 090 C1).

Against the background of an arrangement having the features of the precharacterizing clause of claim 1 (DE 197 39 702 C1), the invention is based on the object of designing the bearing assembly such that the switching shaft, which is already prepositioned in its installed position and is provided with the coupling levers, is mounted at the point where the switching forces act, in a manner such that it is insensitive to tolerances and is convenient for assembly.

According to the invention, this object is achieved in that the bearing body is mounted on the housing front wall of the switch pole, surrounding the switching shaft in the form of a half shell, and in that a first subregion of the bearing body is arranged between the

- 2a -

coupling levers and forms side guide surfaces for the coupling levers which are connected to the switching shaft.

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This configuration allows the bearing assembly and the switching shaft to be replaced independently of one another at any time.

- 5 In this case, the bearing assembly has a simple construction and can thus be produced cost-effectively. In addition, it is compact and can thus be installed easily and in a space-saving manner. In addition, the switching shaft bearing is very largely independent of
10 tolerances, since the switching shaft uses the same bearing body for both radial and axial bearing.

- Stops for the on and off positions of the switching contacts can be provided easily, according to one
15 development of the invention, in that a second subregion of the bearing body projects axially beyond the coupling levers and forms stop surfaces for the coupling levers.

- 20 If the catch hook, which is normally used in an arrangement such as this, is mounted in a window-like recess in the bearing body such that it can pivot, and the mating piece is in the form of a bolt which passes through the coupling levers, this additional element is
25 integrated in a space-saving manner in the bearing assembly.

- One arrangement designed according to the invention for the switching shaft bearing is expediently used in
30 multipole low-voltage circuit breakers in such a way that a bearing assembly at each of the two ends of the switching shaft is associated with the axially outer movable switching contacts. The switching shaft bearing is thus defined statically.

- 35 An exemplary embodiment of the invention is illustrated in Figures 1-4 of the drawing.

In this case:

Figure 1 shows a bearing assembly with a bearing body designed according to the invention,

5 Figure 2 shows an integral switching shaft with two bearing assemblies (as shown in Figure 1) arranged at its ends, viewed in perspective, Figures 3 and 4 show section illustrations of a bearing assembly arranged as shown in Figure 2.

10

Figure 1 shows a bearing assembly 1 with a bearing body 2 and a catch device 3. The bearing body 2 is subdivided into a number of subregions 4, 5, 6, 7, 71 and 72, which are used to provide the bearing for a
15 switching shaft 8, which is illustrated in Figure 2, the stop for coupling levers 9 and 10 during the switching-on and switching-off processes, the holder for the catch device 3 and the mounting for the bearing assembly 1 on one housing front wall 25 of the switch
20 poles.

As is shown in Figure 2, the switching shaft 8 is mounted close to its ends by two bearing assemblies 1 as shown in Figure 1. Two coupling levers 9 and 10 are
25 arranged in each end region of the switching shaft 8 and are used to provide the mechanical connection for a movable switching contact 11 which is associated with an outer switch pole, and for this purpose are arranged in a fixed position on the switching shaft 8, and are
30 at the same time used to provide the axial bearing for the switching shaft 8. Each bearing assembly 1 has in each case one first subregion 4, whose axial width is matched to the distance between the coupling levers 9 and 10. This first subregion 4 of the bearing body 2
35 accordingly projects with a small amount of axial play between the coupling levers 9 and 10 and surrounds the switching shaft 8 in the form of a half shell in one direction, which is the opposite direction to that in

side guide surfaces 13 (see Figure 1) for the coupling levers 9 and 10, which are connected in a fixed manner to the switching shaft 8.

5 A second subregion 5 projects beyond the coupling levers 9 and 10 axially and forms stop surfaces 14 (see Figure 1) and 15 for the coupling levers 9 and 10, in order to limit the movement of the switching shaft 8. The catch device 3 of each bearing assembly 1 has a
10 catch hook 16 which, during the switching-off process, engages behind a bolt 17 (see also Figure 4), which passes through both coupling levers 9 and 10. The catch hook 16 is arranged on a bearing bolt 19 in a window-like recess 18 in a third subregion 6 of the bearing
15 body 2, and is mounted such that it can pivot against the force of a wire torsion spring 20. The catch hook 16 and the wire torsion spring 20 can thus be integrated in the bearing assembly easily and in a space-saving manner even before the installation of the
20 bearing assembly 1.

Figure 3 shows a section through the first and third subregions 4 and 6 of the bearing body 2. The window-like recess 18 for the catch hook 16 has a narrow upper
25 region 21 (see Figure 1) and a broader lower region 22 (see Figure 1). The narrow upper region 21 is matched to the width of the catch hook 16 and fixes it axially, except for a small amount of play. The broader lower region 22 is used to provide additional retention for
30 the wire torsion spring 20. The coupling levers 9 and 10 are in the on position here.

The two bearing assemblies 1 have holes 23 in further subregions 7, 71 and 72 (see also Figure 1) and are
35 connected in a force-fitting and interlocking manner by means of screw connections 24 to the housing front wall

25 of the switch poles. This housing front wall 25 may have a depression 26 in the form of a half shell, as illustrated in Figure 2, in order to predetermine the installation position of the switching shaft 8, and hence to simplify installation of the switching shaft.

Depending on the length of the switching shaft, auxiliary bearing bodies can be arranged in a known manner to provide an additional bearing for the switching shaft. However, all the switch poles of a multipole low-voltage circuit breaker may also have an associated bearing assembly as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 4 shows a section through the second subregion 5 of the bearing body 2, which extends axially outside the coupling levers 9 and 10. Here, however, the coupling levers 9 and 10 are in the off position. At least one of the two coupling levers 9 and 10 is designed such that, during a switching-off process, a section 27 of the circumferential edge of this coupling lever abuts against a first surface 14, which is used as an off stop, of the bearing body 2.

At least one of the two coupling levers 9 and 10 may have a cantilever arm 28 like a hooked nose which, during a switching-on process, abuts against a second surface 15, which is used as an on stop, of the bearing body. An on stop such as this is required, for example, in current-limiting low-voltage circuit breakers.

Patent Claims

1. A bearing arrangement for the switching shaft (8)
of a low-voltage circuit breaker,
5 in which two coupling levers (9, 10) are arranged
at a distance from one another on the integral
switching shaft (8), for mechanical connection of
a movable switching contact (11) which is
associated with one switch pole, and in which a
10 bearing assembly (1) which is connected to a
housing front wall (25) of the switch pole and has
a bearing body (2) is arranged in the region of
the coupling levers (9, 10),
characterized in that
15 - the bearing body (2) is mounted on the housing
front wall (25) of the switch pole, surrounding
the switching shaft (8) in the form of a half
shell, and
- a first subregion (4) of the bearing body (2)
20 is arranged between the coupling levers (9, 10)
and forms side guide surfaces (13) for the
coupling levers (9, 10) which are connected to
the switching shaft (8).
- 25 2. The arrangement as claimed in claim 1,
characterized in that
a second subregion (5) of the bearing body (2)
projects axially beyond the coupling levers (9,
10) and forms stop surfaces (14, 15) for the
30 coupling levers (9, 10).
3. The arrangement as claimed in claim 1 or 2,
characterized in that
the bearing assembly (1) has a catch hook (16),
35 whose mating piece forms a bolt (17) which passes
through the coupling levers (9, 10), with the
catch hook (16) being mounted in a window-like
recess (18) in the bearing body (2) such that it
can pivot.

4. A multipole low-voltage circuit breaker having a bearing arrangement for the switching shaft (8), in which two coupling levers (9, 10) are in each case arranged on the switching shaft (8) for mechanical connection of each movable switching contact (11) which is associated with a switch pole, and one bearing assembly (1), having a bearing body (2) designed as claimed in one of claims 1 to 3, is associated with each of the two coupling levers (9, 10) of the two axially outer movable switching contacts (11).

Abstract

Bearing arrangement for the switching shaft of a low-voltage circuit breaker, and a multipole low-voltage circuit breaker having a bearing arrangement for the switching shaft

In order to provide a bearing for the already prepositioned switching shaft 8, which is fitted with coupling levers 9 and 10, of a low-voltage circuit breaker in the region where the switching forces act, the bearing assembly 1 which is provided for this purpose has a bearing body 2 which is mounted on the housing front wall 25 of the switch pole, surrounding the switching shaft 8 in the form of a half shell, has a subregion 4 which projects between two coupling levers 9 and 10, which are at a distance from one another and are connected to a movable switching contact 11, and thus forms side guide surfaces 13 for the coupling levers 9 and 10.

A bearing assembly 1 such as this can be arranged in both the end regions of the switching shaft 8 in multipole circuit breakers.

Figure 2

FIG 1

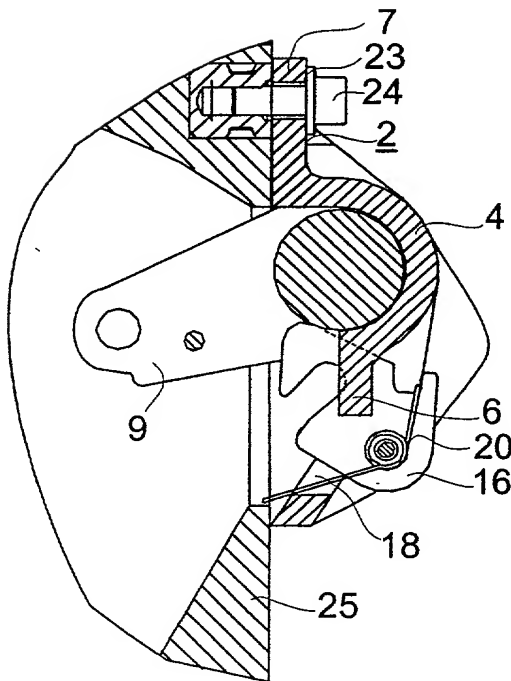
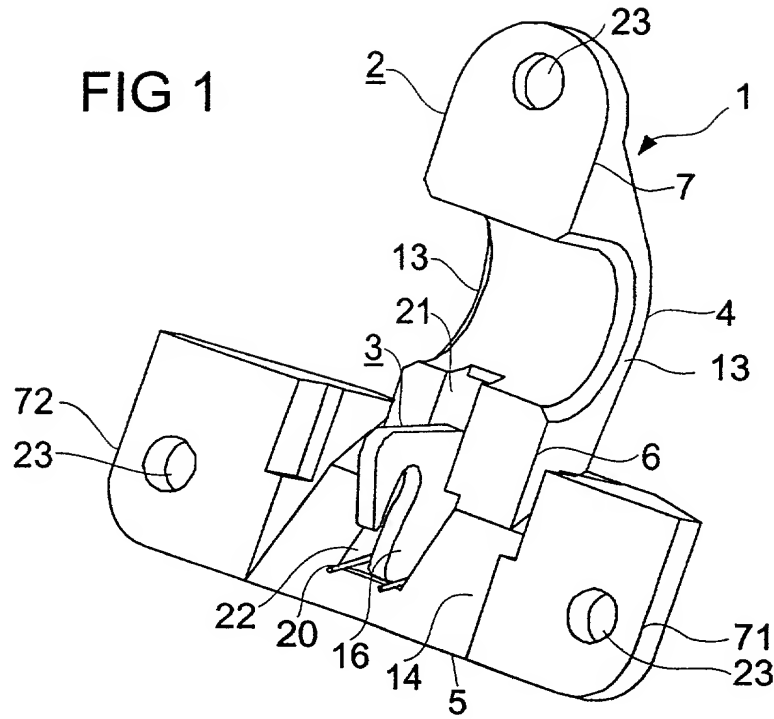


FIG 3

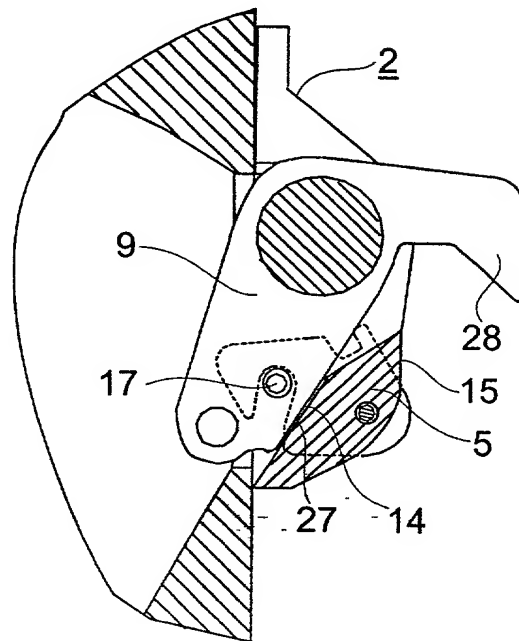


FIG 4

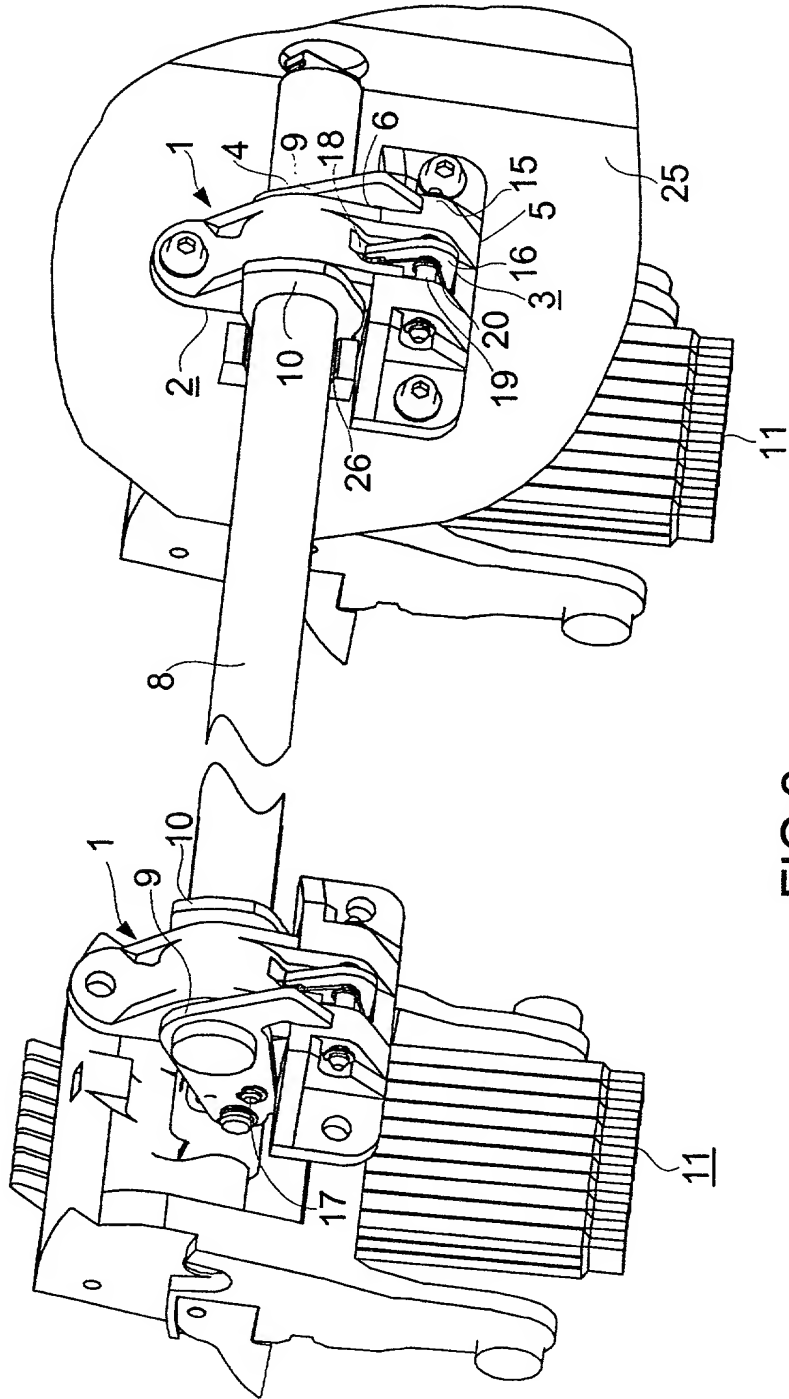


FIG 2

German Language Declaration

Prior foreign applications
Priorität beansprucht

Priority Claimed

19948716.2
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(Nummer)

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(Country)
(Land)

30.09.1999
(Day Month Year Filed)
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☐ Yes
Ja

☐ No
Nein

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(Nummer)

(Country)
(Land)

(Day Month Year Filed)
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☐ Yes
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PCT/DE00/03261
(Application Serial No.)
(Anmeldeseriennummer)

15.09.2000
(Filing Date D, M, Y)
(Anmeldedatum T, M, J)

anhängig
(Status)
(patentiert, anhängig,
aufgegeben)

pending
(Status)
(patented, pending,
abandoned)

(Application Serial No.)
(Anmeldeseriennummer)

(Filing Date D,M,Y)
(Anmeldedatum T, M, J)

(Status)
(patentiert, anhängig,
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German Language Declaration

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Harness, Dickey & Pierce, P.L.C.
12355 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 350 20191 Reston, Va.
Telephone: +1 703 390 3030 and Facsimile +1 703 390 3020
or
Customer No. 30596

Voller Name des einzigen oder ursprünglichen Erfinders:		Full name of sole or first inventor:	
Michael Bach		Michael Bach	
Unterschrift des Erfinders	Datum	Inventor's signature	Date
<i>Michael Bach</i>	25.2.02	<i>Michael Bach</i>	25.2.02
Wohnsitz		Residence	
Berlin, Deutschland DEX		Berlin, Germany	
Staatsangehörigkeit		Citizenship	
Deutsch		German	
Postanschrift		Post Office Address	
Ligusterweg 20 A		Ligusterweg 20 A	
12437 Berlin, Deutschland		12437 Berlin, Germany	
Voller Name des zweiten Miterfinders (falls zutreffend):		Full name of second joint inventor, if any:	
Detlev Schmidt		Detlev Schmidt	
Unterschrift des Erfinders	Datum	Second Inventor's signature	Date
<i>Detlev Schmidt</i>	8.2.2002	<i>Detlev Schmidt</i>	8.2.2002
Wohnsitz		Residence	
Berlin, Deutschland DEX		Berlin, Germany	
Staatsangehörigkeit		Citizenship	
Deutsch		German	
Postanschrift		Post Office Address	
Richardstr. 61		Richardstr. 61	
12055 Berlin, Deutschland		12055 Berlin, Germany	

(Bitte entsprechende Informationen und Unterschriften im Falle von dritten und weiteren Miterfindern angeben).

(Supply similar information and signature for third and subsequent joint inventors).

Voller Name des dritten Miterfinders: Michael Sebekow		Full name of third joint inventor: Michael Sebekow	
Unterschrift des Erfinders <i>Michael Sebekow</i>	Datum 15.02.02	Inventor's signature <i>Michael Sebekow</i>	Date 15.02.02
Wohnsitz Berlin, Deutschland (DEX)		Residence Berlin, Germany	
Staatsangehörigkeit Deutsch		Citizenship German	
Postanschrift Spinolastr. 8		Post Office Address Spinolastr. 8	
13125 Berlin, Deutschland		13125 Berlin, Germany	
Voller Name des vierten Miterfinders: Guenther Seidler-Stahl		Full name of fourth joint inventor: Guenther Seidler-Stahl	
Unterschrift des Erfinders <i>Guenther Seidler-Stahl</i>	Datum 02.02.02	Inventor's signature <i>Guenther Seidler-Stahl</i>	Date 02.02.02
Wohnsitz Berlin, Deutschland (DEX)		Residence Berlin, Germany	
Staatsangehörigkeit Deutsch		Citizenship German	
Postanschrift Sternstr. 11		Post Office Address Sternstr. 11	
13359 Berlin, Deutschland		13359 Berlin, Germany	
Voller Name des fünften Miterfinders: Ingo Thiede		Full name of fifth joint inventor: Ingo Thiede	
Unterschrift des Erfinders <i>Ingo Thiede</i>	Datum 08.02.02	Inventor's signature <i>Ingo Thiede</i>	Date 08.02.02
Wohnsitz Berlin, Deutschland (DEX)		Residence Berlin, Germany	
Staatsangehörigkeit DE		Citizenship DE	
Postanschrift Fregestr. 76		Post Office Address Fregestr. 76	
12159 Berlin		12159 Berlin	
Voller Name des sechsten Miterfinders: Sezai Tuerkmen		Full name of sixth joint inventor: Sezai Tuerkmen	
Unterschrift des Erfinders <i>Sezai Tuerkmen</i>	Datum 08.02.02	Inventor's signature <i>Sezai Tuerkmen</i>	Date 08.02.02
Wohnsitz Berlin, Deutschland (DEX)		Residence Berlin, Germany	
Staatsangehörigkeit Deutsch		Citizenship German	
Postanschrift Schuckertdamm 334		Post Office Address Schuckertdamm 334	
13629 Berlin, Deutschland		13629 Berlin, Germany	

(Bitte entsprechende Informationen und Unterschriften im Falle von dritten und weiteren Miterfindern angeben).

(Supply similar information and signature for third and subsequent joint inventors).